

## THE CLASSICS AND THE MINISTRY.

There is hopefulness in the fact that last year, in the proceedings of the Classical Conference, held at Ann Arbor, Michigan, a symposium was held on the value of humanistic, especially classical, studies as a preparation for the study of theology. The papers read in this symposium are brought together, as a reprint from the "School Review," in a pamphlet of forty-seven pages, published as a University Bulletin.

Among the reasons for the study of the classics is put first the fact that "the Christian religion can not possibly retain moral and social leadership if its ministers lack an intellectual equipment which is equal to that required by any calling in the most highly civilized regions of the world." To this is to be added the fact that a thorough investigation of the New Testament in both its history and meaning rests always on a knowledge of the Greek language, while the Latin also came in speedily, soon after the canon was closed, as the official language of the early Church and as the medium of the Fathers. With the Renaissance there came as it were a rediscovery of the literature of Greece, calling for familiarity on the part of all cultured people with the language in which it was written. Then came the theological struggles of the Reformation period, in which almost all the discussions were in Latin, again demanding knowledge of that language on the part of any intelligent student of that period and its history.

The necessity of the classics to the general culture of civilization, to the promotion of the "humanities," to the mental discipline of the student, the thinker, and the preacher, is duly emphasized. One important point is perhaps not enough adverted to, however, namely, the fact that the Greek, which was chosen of God as the lingual vehicle of his revelation and the declaration of his grace, was a language crystallized in its greatest perfection and not left to the mutations and deterioration which marked the descent of the Latin from the Augustan or Golden Age. It furnished the most accurate means of conveying thought that culture has ever been able to find, as is evidenced by the fact that modern science has drawn upon it in the most liberal fashion for its nomenclature. Its flexibility, capacity for giving delicate shades of meaning, and beauty have never been surpassed. What pure mathematics has been, in the way of mental discipline and habit, in relation to accuracy of thought, clearness, and precision of reasoning, the Greek language has ever been to accuracy of expression.

Much attention is paid, in the symposium, and most justly so, to the fact that there is "no royal road to learning," and to the fact that "short cuts" with quick results ought not to be allowed to become either necessary or desirable in the church. In the ministry the "short cut" denies the very ideal of the churches of Protestantism. In this connection the writer of this part of the discussion rightly characterizes the "false democracy in learning" which makes the elective system "run riot" in some quarters. Doubtless, as the writer thinks, many of the short pastorates so common nowadays may be due to the lack of that profounder train-

ing which enables a man to wear longer. Especially does he emphasize the fact that "we would not have so many fads in religion if men knew more of the history of thought."

## PRESIDENT PATTON'S ESTIMATE OF MR. M'CORMICK.

Whenever President Patton, of Princeton, speaks, it is worth while for those within the reach of his voice to listen, and when he writes we may well spare time and attention to get his message. In a recent sketch of Cyrus H. McCormick, founder of McCormick Theological Seminary, published in *The Interior*, Dr. Patton says some significant things that are of concern not only to his own branch of the Church, but to all who love truth and are zealous for the faith.

The one characteristic of Mr. McCormick's Christian life, to which he repeatedly recurs, is steadfast loyalty to the conservative theology of the Westminster Confession. For example we read: "He was not only a Presbyterian, but he was also a believer in the theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith; and it was his wish and his hope that the seminary should be a center of power for the defense of this theology, and through its graduates, for its dissemination throughout the wide area open to the seminary's influence."

After the great Chicago fire, Mr. McCormick became owner of *The Interior* and appointed as its editor Dr. Patton, who was also professor in the seminary. Of the policy of both owner and editor the writer says: "My special interest in *The Interior*, of course, consisted in its being the organ of the theological seminary, and I make no concealment of the fact that I used its editorial columns as well as I could for the purpose of teaching Calvinistic doctrine and of opposing what I regarded as error. My method may not have been good journalism, from a commercial point of view, and some thought that it was not good journalism even from a theological point of view; but it was journalism with a purpose. Everybody knew what to expect from it, and it had its warm friends as well as its outspoken opponents. Mr. McCormick gave me his hearty support, and used to enjoy my polemic editorials, though I dare say every one of them was followed by notices of 'discontinuance.'"

In speaking of the heresy trial of Prof. Swing he says: "The question involved was simply the degree of divergence from confessional orthodoxy which could be tolerated in the Presbyterian Church. . . . In this controversy Mr. McCormick supported the conservative side, and did so without wavering until the controversy was over."

Of most interest and significance is Dr. Patton's comment on present-day conditions as contrasted with what he conceives to be the historic faith of his own church. He says:

"Times have changed since then. The Church has moved—whether backwards or forwards, I do not say. But it is safe to affirm that the broadest kind of broad churchism nestles safely now under the sheltering wing of the Presbyterian Church. What broad churchism comes to in the end can be easily seen by any one who